THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. 103, NO. 2 NEW YORK, MONDAY, JULY 8, 1940 NUMBER 1336

Subversive Activist No. 1

In a time of peril Henry Ford insists on aiding the enemy. His refusal to accept a contract for 9,000 Rolls-Royce warplane engines because 6,000 of them were to be sold to Great Britain is a two-fisted blow at national defense. It is undeniable that if Hitler conquers England, the danger to this country and to the democracy for which it stands will be redoubled. Aside from that, the Rolls-Royce is an extremely efficient British motor, which this country can obtain for its own planes only by agreeing to produce it for Britain as well.

It may be thought that Mr. Ford is excusable because he is just a cranky old man. But he is too dangerous and powerful to be waved away with an indulgent smile. He has been in close contact with the Nazi regime. He it was who long ago stimulated anti-Jewish propaganda by publishing forged documents. In the management of his business he has shown himself a lawless autocrat, who refused to comply with the NRA while it was still valid law, who has defied the National Labor Relations Act, who has hired thugs to beat up union organizers. Father Coughlan has long been playing his game. One could go farther and fare worse in looking for powerful fifth columnists of the fascist type.

Democracy cannot tolerate enemies of such power within its ranks. If the present crisis continues—and we see no sign of its ending—the Ford plants should be taken over by the government at the first legal opportunity, as essential to our national defense. Mr. Ford himself should be deprived of his executive authority.

How France Was Conquered

When the whole story of the French surrender is known, we may find that the defeat was caused far more by treachery and appeasement than by German military strength. Elie Bois, editor of Le Petit Parisien, tells in The New York Times an amazing story of Weygand's insistent demand to the French government for surrender. Weygand apparently painted the situation of the French army blacker than it was and reported an imaginary Communist uprising in Paris. Pétain supported Weygand, and Bois explains this charitably on the ground that the Marshal is too old to exercise competent judgment. If Bois is right, those who say that French labor, the Communists or the Popular Front, defeated France are talking nonsense. It was treachery in the highest places that brought her downfall.

Meanwhile the conquered country is being run by the Gestapo. Such newspapers as are allowed to appear are filled with Nazi propaganda from Berlin. The French are being subjected to the same restrictions (against listening to foreign radio stations, etc.) that the German population has long endured. French and German police together are hunting down thousands of political refugees, artists, writers, liberals and radicals.

M. Laval's White Peace

It is now obvious, if anyone doubted it, that France in defeat is to have a totalitarian government. A dispatch to The New York Times—"delayed via Berlin"—says that it will be formed by a combination of fascist groups, including Adrien Marquet's "Neo-Social-

CONTENTS

The Week 43
Editorial
Shall We Go to War? 46
General Articles
How They Won with Willkie . Jonathan Mitchell 48
The Horse and Buggy Boys . . Bruce Bliven 50
After Abstract Art . . . Wyndham Lewis 51
Winter Landscape (verse) . John Berryman 52
Washington Notes . . . . . T. R. B. 53
Other People's Money . . John T. Flynn 53
The Storm and the Circus . . Otis Ferguson 54
A Communication . . Frederick L. Schuman 55
The Bandwagon 57
Correspondence 57
Books in Review
Poet in Wartime . . . . W. H. Auden 59
Canada Next . . . . C. Hartley Grattan 60
Broken Teacups . . . Muriel H. Burns 60
Knights of Labor . . . Richard H. Rovere 61
A Reader's List 62

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1940, IN THE U.S.A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49TH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.
ENTERED AS SECOND CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879
PRINTED IN THE U. S. A.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG.
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ists" and the French Social Party of Colonel de la Rocque. A prominent part will be played by Laval, warm friend of Mussolini and Franco and long-time advocate of appeasement. It was Laval who raised the slogan, "A white peace to offset the Red danger." Now he has a Brown Shirt peace instead.

The new situation in France raises many problems for Americans, among them the question of the Monroe Doctrine as just modified by Congress. We have said we will not tolerate the handing over of possessions in this hemisphere from one European power to another. But what shall we do when the French colonies near our shores are ruled by a puppet government responsible only to Hitler? Might we not discover that, in effect, the Nazis have already invaded this hemisphere?

England Waits for Attack

The world has never witnessed such a spectacle as it has seen for the past few days: England grimly waiting for an attempted invasion that will mean life or death for herself or Germany. Only two things could prevent the expected assault: an armistice looking toward peace, or the beginning of real war in the Balkans, perhaps with Germany and Russia arrayed against each other. For various reasons, neither of these developments seems likely.

Military experts have exhausted themselves and their readers trying to decide whether England can successfully resist. The simple truth is that they do not know and neither does anyone else. The British lost enormous quantities of military supplies in Flanders. Even before that happened, they were inferior to the Germans in every department of war except the navy. The German superiority, especially in the air, has no doubt been increasing, being aided by the factories captured in the Netherlands, Belgium and France. On the other hand, the English planes are proving themselves superior in quality to the German.

England's sorest danger point is probably Ireland, where the secret, outlawed but powerful Irish Republican Army might decide to coöperate with the Nazis. Even if this did not happen, Ireland is almost defenseless against attack. German airplanes could put hundreds of thousands of men into Ireland within a few days, without going near England in the process. The British are talking about sending some of their foreign legions, of French, Czechs and Poles, to Ulster to be ready for emergency. Even in the shadow of invasion, the struggle for Ulster goes on, in spite of the danger that it may be settled by the coördination of Ulster, Ireland and England under the Gestapo.

The Key to Pittman

It is an embarrassing necessity to apologize to the British people for a public statement by the chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs. Yet Senator Pittman's unsolicited advice to them, to leave the British Isles undefended in the face of Hitler's invasion and retire to Canada with the fleet, is so tactless that we are compelled confidentially to tell Britishers who do not understand the vagaries of American politics that the chairmen of our congressional committees do not achieve their posts by virtue of anything except seniority, and that Senator Pittman is not a real leader either of public opinion or of official action in this country on foreign affairs or anything else. His continued reëlection is based mainly on his services to the silver-mining interests of his state, to whose profits he has added millions by sponsorship of a law compelling this government to buy silver at a price far above its true value.

By the Way—

In the excitement of the week we almost forgot to mention the Republican platform. As a matter of fact we haven't read it yet, and we doubt if one-tenth of one percent of the voters ever will read it. The platforms of the two major parties, Americans have learned, are made for two purposes, and two purposes only—first, to conceal the disagreements within the party between diametrically opposite views, second, to catch votes by offering everything to everybody. The party doesn't mean to carry them out, and almost never does, provided the planks propose anything specific enough so that it is possible to check performance at all. Wise voters have learned rather to size up candidates and the forces behind them. The Republicans and their candidates have made their record in Congress and in the states which they control; that is their real platform. It is one principally of obstruction to reform, hostility to labor, penury in relief, short-sightedness in foreign affairs, and anything to beat that man in the White House.

Mr. Willkie's Running Mate

Senator McNary is a curious running mate for Wendell Willkie. Willkie is an interventionist whose views on foreign policy do not greatly differ from those of President Roosevelt; McNary is a strong isolationist. Willkie is the outstanding private-utility magnate of the country; McNary is a faithful friend of public power. To get the presidential and vice-presidential nominees together on these very important policies requires that one or the other of them throw a back somersault in the air. Of course, from the standpoint of professional politicians with no interest in principles, McNary is the ideal running mate. He comes from the West; Willkie is from the East. He can collect some farmer and liberal Western votes while Willkie draws in the support of the hate-Roosevelt crowd. The professionals may even welcome the sharp disagreement mentioned above. They can offer Willkie in sections where the people are for the Allies and against

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public ownership, and McNary where these attitudes are reversed.

Rumors of Peace

The American press has been full of rumors that England and Germany are secretly talking of peace. These reports are so persistent that Neville Chamberlain took to the airwaves to deny them and insist that England will fight to the death. It may well be true that Hitler would welcome another British appeasement before hundreds of thousands of his young men are sent to die on the sands of the English coast. If he could keep England quiet a few years he could settle matters in Eastern Europe and then turn West again. The English surely know by now that Hitler's word is valueless, that any peace made with him is only a truce, that he is determined on the destruction of their empire. If they consented now to stop fighting it would only be to give themselves an interval for the military preparation in which they are so sadly lacking. But Hitler certainly would not make a peace which permitted England to continue to build up her armament. While there are no doubt many appeasers left in England—as there are here—the dominant sentiment is to destroy Hitler or to be destroyed in the effort. We do not see how peace can be seriously considered at this time.

Will Stalin Change Sides?

Every week or two there is a fresh crop of rumors that Stalin and Hitler have come to the parting of the ways. There is no doubt that England is working hard to bring this about and that the United States is helping her; only the other day we released a large shipment of machine tools for Russia which we had previously insisted could not be spared. It is certainly true that Stalin fears and distrusts Hitler and now sees that he made a terrible mistake in signing the treaty last August which brought about the war. German propagandists angrily accuse Sir Stafford Cripps of persuading Russia to recapture Bessarabia, which seems like overlooking a simple and natural explanation in favor of a far-fetched one. Stalin certainly would not change sides in the war, even to the extent of shifting the orientation of his neutrality, if he thought Great Britain was likely to be defeated in the next few weeks or months. Our guess is that he took Bessarabia because he thought it was a good thing to do; he now has a magnificent natural frontier of hills and marshes in case Germany should decide to attack him with an enveloping movement on his left flank. We shall be greatly surprised if his attitude toward the war in the West does not remain about what it is now.

No Tears for Rumania

Surely no one can work up any indignation over the plight of Rumania. She entered the last War for what there was in it and grabbed territory right and left while the grabbing was good. The bribes she received in the war settlement have been a sore spot in Europe ever since. Bessarabia and northern Bukovina were inhabited by Ukrainians; much of Transylvania was legitimately Hungarian; the southern Dobruja was Bulgarian (and Turkish); and Rumania was harsh toward all these subject populations. Long ago she abandoned any pretense of democracy, and her persecution of the Jews was notorious before Hitler ever was heard of.

Recently her rulers have wavered between a brand of fascism favorable to the Allies and one favorable to Germany. Their sole concern was to be on the winning side. Britain offered to protect her against Germany only as a military measure in the strategy of the Near East, and Rumania's recent renunciation of that protection followed the admission to power of the Nazi Iron Guards, which resulted from Hitler's victory in France.

The Incident at Galatz

The macabre incident at Galatz, on July 1, will surprise no one who remembers what happened in Rumania after the last war. In those days the phrase "shot while trying to escape"—since made famous by the Nazis—recurred in almost every dispatch from Bucharest. Now the shootings have been revived on a larger scale. It appears, according to official Rumanian dispatches, that a group of "Jews and/or Communists" tried to get into Russian-occupied territory. One can imagine that they were formidably armed with whatever belongings any refugee is armed with: some old pillows, pots and pans, pitiful sacks of clothing. . . . These refugees, so say the Rumanians, "attacked" strong detachments of Rumanian troops, who "resisted" and then "counter-attacked" with machine guns, valiantly killing between 600 to 1,000 of the impertinent civilians. "Two soldiers and police officers were also shot"—two as against 600. It looks like a pogrom organized by the Iron Guard as consolation for the Rumanian defeat.

Asia for the Japanese

There is nothing new about the "Asiatic Monroe Doctrine" just proclaimed by Japan. For years she has wanted to do something of this sort, and only the fear of the armed strength of Great Britain, the United States and France has prevented her. Today France is gone: even though some part of her fleet and some few of her colonies might continue to resist, they would offer no serious threat to Japanese ambitions. Great Britain is confronted with a life-and-death struggle for survival in her own island. Even the United States suddenly realizes that her navy may be more urgently required in the Atlantic than doing police duty for the English, French, Dutch and American possessions in the Orient.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

We may expect to see the Japanese thermometer rise in exact proportion as the situation gets hotter. It is too soon for any sweeping gesture like seizing the Dutch East Indies; but Japan can demand that French Indo-China cut off military supplies for Chiang Kai-shek, and that England close the Burma Road, to the same end. She will blockade Hong Kong as she blockaded the foreign concessions at Tientsin. If England survives the German assault, Japan will again become conciliatory. If England is defeated and the United States decides she has trouble enough nearer home, then we may expect grandiose plans for a huge Japanese empire covering the whole Orient. The question in that case will be whether Hitler and Stalin will consent and if not, whether the Japanese feel strong enough to defy them.

Uncle Sam Sits Tight

For the present, the United States is sitting tight as regards the Far East. Secretary Hull has said again, for the twentieth time, that we expect all nations in the Orient to live up to their treaty obligations. It is morally certain that the British and American governments are consulting about the Far East and that this attitude represents a common decision. There are some Americans who would like to appease Japan, on the ground that our real danger is in the Atlantic and that we cannot afford simultaneous trouble in both oceans. Most people, however, seem to take the more sensible view that Japan, like Hitler, cannot be appeased, that the more we gave her, the more she would ask.

The American fleet, after disappearing in the vast stretches of the Pacific for a week, returned demurely to Hawaii, explaining that it had been engaged in routine maneuvers. A cynical friend of ours suggests that Washington took away the fleet, and let people think it was heading for the Panama Canal, in order to see what Japan would do. If he is right, the stratagem certainly worked; no sooner had the fleet supposedly gone, than the new Japanese Monroe Doctrine was announced. There may have been some red faces in Tokyo the day the fleet came back to Hawaii—assuming that a Japanese militarist can blush.

News Notes of a Week

Nazi troops seized their first British territory when they occupied the evacuated islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Sark and Alderney, forty miles off the French coast in the English Channel. . . . A fortified defense zone was organized along the south and east coasts of England. . . . The Italian government announced that Air Marshal Italo Balbo, popular Fascist hero, had been killed in an air battle with British planes. The British Foreign Office denied that any British planes had been near the scene of the crash, and suggested that Marshal Balbo had been "put out of the way." . . . British and American refugees left Hong Kong in fear of a Japanese attack. . . . Friday, June 28, was the twenty-first anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Versailles.

Six leaders of the American Student Union at the University of Michigan were expelled by President Ruthven without public explanation or trial. . . . The American Association of University Women agreed to care for several thousand children of British university graduates for the duration of the war. . . . Two court actions were begun to test the constitutionality of the act forcing WPA workers to swear that they are not members of the Communist Party, the German-American Bund or other "subversive organizations." . . . Half a billion dollars' worth of naval contracts were awarded within two hours after the "speed-up" bill was signed, permitting the Navy Department to dispense with competitive bidding. . . . The Smith omnibus gag bill became a law with the signature of the President. It provides for the fingerprinting and registration of aliens, and severe penalties for "undermining the loyalty" of the military services or advocating any change in the government of the United States by force and violence. . . . The President asked Congress for a steeply graduated excess-profits tax to help pay the costs of defense. . . . The Philadelphia police investigated and exploded the story of a Red plot to blow up the Republican convention.

Shall We Go to War?

THE RECOMMENDATION that the United States ought at once to declare war on Germany, in a communication on page 55 of this issue by Professor Frederick L. Schuman of Williams, is being made by many others of distinction in this country. Attitudes on this proposal are likely to be the result of resolute commitments previously made—on the one hand, by those who hate war and distrust involvement in Europe so much that they have steeled their wills against being moved from that position by any feeling, however strong, or by any argument, however cogent; and, on the other, by those who hate Hitler so much, and fear so greatly for this country on account of his recent successes, that they would go to any length to stop him. We submit, however, that a grave decision of this sort should not be arrived at in such a frame of mind. The emotions of both sides are right and cannot successfully be gainsaid; what is necessary is exceedingly cool and keen calculation concerning the best way now to safeguard the future of those things that all democrats hold dear.

The one argument that would be stronger than any other for an immediate war declaration is that which Mr. Schuman explicitly puts aside. If it were reasonably certain that our belligerency would save Britain from conquest by Hitler, it would be almost impossible to make a good case for remaining at peace. That is not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

because British imperialism is an admirable thing, or because of any feeling of "blood thicker than water," but because Britain at her worst is still, as the last foothold of independent democracy in Europe, infinitely better than Hitler's Germany at its best, and because she is our own last possible ally in a struggle against future totalitarian aggression. If it was criminal and well-nigh traitorous for the appeasers to refuse to risk war for Republican Spain or Czecho-Slovakia or Finland, how much worse would it be for us to stand aside and see Britain's institutions crushed under the Panzer-divisionen, her writers and political leaders tortured in Himmler's concentration camps, and her navy turned against us!

But we have never seen a reasonable demonstration that this country could by declaring war give Britain any decisive aid that she is not now getting. Her great test is a matter of days, or weeks at most. We have no army ready to go, and only a negligible air force. Her navy is still overwhelmingly superior to those of her enemies—except in the matter of defense against planes. If it cannot prevail, those ships of our fleet which could get there in time could scarcely do so either. Mr. Schuman does not even stop to argue the point.

His case rests entirely on the presumed psychological effects on this country of being at war. Belligerency will, he says, enable us to do those things which we shall have to do in order to be prepared in time, and to resist Hitler's divisive intrigue and propaganda. This might be true if the nation went to war convinced, even to the extent of 75 or 80 percent, that it had no good alternative. But to argue that a democratic nation which is mentally and emotionally unready for war is to be made ready by a war declaration seems to us unrealistic in the extreme.

In the first place, there is no dictator here capable of carrying off such a political coup. In the second place, if the step were seriously proposed now by the President, who comes nearest of anyone to having the requisite power, the opposition would wreck any chance of national unity, and perhaps even of such mobilization for defense and aid to Britain as we are giving. Finally, recent history provides no assurance that Hitler does not find the fishing very good indeed in the troubled waters even of an open enemy, if it is not of one mind. Norway, Belgium and France, though under the spur of actual invasion, were not so united by war as to be proof against intrigue and treachery. We can think of no better way to open cracks for him in American national unity than to force entrance into the war against the convictions of a majority.

Mr. Schuman's business is to persuade the people that they must fight, not to persuade them that they must declare war in order to be able to fight.

Omitted from Mr. Schuman's argument are important considerations on the other side. How would the British regard us in the future if we were to declare war without being able to do anything effective to save them? And what would this do for our prestige among the dominions, in Latin America, in Asia? Should we not be repeating the mistakes of Chamberlain in regard to Poland and the rest? And where should we find ourselves if, a few weeks after our declaration, Britain were conquered? We should either have to make an ignominious and damaging peace or challenge Hitler to come over and defeat us on this continent a year or two before we were ready for him.

If Britain holds off the Germans for the present, it still will be questionable whether we could not aid her more by non-belligerency. If we declared war it would be almost impossible to refrain from beginning to raise and equip a great army. And this would use up all the equipment our still unmobilized industry could supply, just as in the last war. Britain for long would be cut off from what help she is receiving.

In the best event of all, that is, a reversal of fortunes that would yield a chance of British victory, we should be committed to that outcome without any prior understanding about peace aims. Such a victory could be won, of course, only by armed invasion of the Continent. The cost would be a long and exhausting war. And it would come only with the help of a great American expeditionary force. Again our soldiers would have spilt their blood on European soil—for let nobody suppose that this nation, having once declared war, would give up without having spent its last ounce of strength for victory. But this ought never to happen again, if at all, without a clear and prior understanding, not only of what they are fighting against, but of what they are fighting for. If Britain can hold off the invader long enough to give us a chance to aid with military force, she can hold him off long enough to give us a chance to have some guarantee of the terms of the future peace.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

Editors

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY GEORGE SOULE
STARK YOUNG

Assistant Editors: OTIS FERGUSON ELIZABETH HULING

Contributing Editors

H. N. BRAILSFORD JOHN T. FLYNN E. C. LINDEMAN
JONATHAN MITCHELL R. G. TUGWELL

Treasurer: DANIEL MEBANE

E. G. WOOD
Advertising Manager

BYRON DEXTER
Circulation Manager

SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

EDITED AND PRODUCED UNDER UNION CONDITIONS BY CONTRACT WITH THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE GUILD, LOCAL 18, UOPWA, CIO

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How They Won with Willkie

JUST HOW WAS IT that the Republican Party got its baby giant panda, the overstuffed, furry man with the owlish eyes, Mr. Wendell Lewis Willkie? It can be argued that he was the special gift—not to be opened by the public until November—of finance capitalism. His sponsorship was little less than august—Mr. Thomas W. Lamont, hiding in a hotel bedroom at Philadelphia until implored to leave town, and the head of the National Manufacturers' Association, Mr. H. W. Prentis Jr.

But such an explanation misses the special meaning of Mr. Willkie's triumph. Big business had no reason to fear Mr. Dewey, member of the New York City Bankers' Club, or Senator Taft, chief corporation lawyer of Cincinnati. Big business had all bets covered at Philadelphia.

The reason the Republicans took Mr. Willkie—or rather resigned themselves to him—was only partially big business. Mostly it was because of the incredible, but verifiable, fact of the Willkie petitions, signed by a claimed four and a half million voters. For purposes of comparison, remember that the good Dr. Townsend, in his flush days, boasted only about twice this number. Dr. Townsend scared the wits out of politicians of all shades; Mr. Willkie did the same for those of his newly adopted party.

The Willkie petitions—as well as the yellow, blue and white tide of telegrams that flowed in upon Philadelphia—have to be accounted for. Do we have here a phony, something like the campaign of Associated Gas and Electric against the death-sentence holding-company act of 1935, or Mr. Gannett's and Father Coughlin's campaign against Mr. Roosevelt's reorganization bill two years ago? Or have the American people, beaten down by sample polls and radio popularity contests, become a nation of saps? Or what?

In the nature of the case, neither Mr. Willkie's political rivals nor newspaper correspondents were able to check any large part of his four and a half million names. But random samples from all across the country seemed to show that they did not come from telephone books and city directories, although here and there were patches of names in the same handwriting. Most of the names were those of real people, who wanted our long-lipped, tousle-headed Indiana friend for President.

The assertion of the Willkie managers that the enthusiasm of the petition-signers for Mr. Willkie was purely spontaneous, that it sprang up like crocuses on the lawn, is nonsense. The Willkie group admitted to two organizations, the Associated Willkie Clubs and the Willkie Mailing Committee. The first was formed about three months ago by Mr. Oren Root Jr., nephew of the formidable Elihu, and was most noticeably staffed by elegant young Princetonians. It was this group that sent out the petitions. The Mailing Committee, among other duties, collected the petitions when completed and saw to it that each bundle was placed before the proper convention delegate. At Philadelphia, it had a seventh-floor hideaway in an office building and was as strictly professional as the Root group was amateurish.

In northern New Jersey and southern Connecticut, commuters' dormitories for New York City, the setting up of Willkie clubs seems to have been very easy. The clubs in the Middle West were more mysterious. A group of clubs in neighboring small towns of a farm state were apparently started by a high American Legion official. He denied the charge, but it was obvious modesty. He has a large law practice and political ambitions.

In the largest city of another farm state the Willkie club was founded by a youthful lawyer employed by a great railroad. He insisted he had acted quite on his own, but agreed that his superiors on the railroad's legal staff felt that Mr. Willkie must save the country.

The Willkie telegrams—two members of the New York delegation reported receiving twenty-five thousand apiece—for the most part also seemed genuine. The Dewey and Taft headquarters made jokes about them for twenty-four hours, then began telling horror stories. The chief of these concerned a delegate who received word at Philadelphia that his small daughter was ill and would be operated on at once. The father frantically long-distanced his home, asking to be informed the moment the operation was over. In due course he received a wire: "Little Elsie doing splendidly. Be a man and vote for Willkie."

One of the angriest men in Philadelphia was an able Middle Western politician, a seconder of Senator Taft's nomination. According to an excellent source, just before the voting began he learned that for four days Willkie partisans had been besieging his eighty-three-year-old mother. She had finally telephoned him, begging him to vote for Willkie—do anything—so she might have peace.

Many details of the Willkie boom are still excessively obscure. But the story told by piecing together the things said by his enemies and friends at Philadelphia is not that of a mechanical trick engineered by the publicity staffs of the Edison Electric Institute and the NAM. It is quite different and more important. It is the informal banding together of key business men for direct participation in politics.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

About a year ago, a group of business acquaintances started to see "if something couldn't be done for Wendell." The leader, most enthusiastic member and hardest worker was Mr. Willkie himself. As the group widened, the country was loosely parceled out to individuals who were always business men, never politicians. Joe—a corporation, railroad or bank president—knew such-and-such state like the inside of his pocket; he would do something for Wendell there. Joe would summon local Dicks and Toms, each of whom would be introduced to Mr. Willkie and would pledge allegiance. Apparently until the sad-faced Mr. Russell Davenport, former managing editor of Fortune, came to assist him, Mr. Willkie ran this whole sprawling network single-handed.

When Mr. Willkie arrived here two days before the convention opened, his delegate strength could have been mustered in a medium-sized hotel room. As has been said a thousand times, the Republican Party is the creature of big business. Why was it that it refused to take the orders big business gave? Or, if it refused to take orders, why didn't the politicians lick the big-business amateurs? The answers to these questions supply the rest of the explanation of Mr. Willkie's triumph. Just as business men, in their own natural persons, are moving in on politics, so the politicians, bankrupt of imagination and energy, are abdicating.

The politicians' hatred of Mr. Willkie was strictly selfish. The county chairman hated him because he wasn't an organization man, because he wouldn't know, and wouldn't be interested in, how they overturned the Democratic majority in the 'Steenth Congressional District in 1938.

The top-rank Republicans hated him for more personal reasons—because of the sort of man he is. Mr. Willkie is something out of the native candle-light drama—the traveling salesman who helps Pa with the chores, wipes the dishes for Ma, hugs Sis and teaches magic tricks to Bub, while simultaneously closing a contract for five lightning rods, one for each corner of the barn, and one for the house. Any gathering that includes Mr. Willkie consists of Mr. Willkie and those who were also present. Before the convention opened, Mr. Landon, the tragic Mr. Hoover, a host of Senators and Representatives, were all big men in the party. Now where are they?

The candidacy of that other, inferior wonder child, Mr. Dewey, was doomed from the start of the balloting. But there is no obvious reason why the professionals at Philadelphia could not have built a stop-Willkie movement around Senator Taft—no reason, that is, except their own dumbheadedness. At least in my opinion, it was not the celebrated breakaway of New England, not even the breakaway of New York, that made inevitable Mr. Willkie's triumph. It was the slow erosion of the Southern delegations, ballot after ballot; the Southerners were professionals, and their desertion was a visible sign that, in their expert judgment, their compeers in the North were too indecisive and stupid to succeed.

The meaning of Mr. Willkie's triumph, I think, goes back a long way. In this country, big business men have seldom themselves gone into politics; they have paid other men, usually unsuccessful lawyers, to do their jobs for them. That was how they beat

back the Populist movement and Bryan in the 1890's, beat back Wilson's New Freedom in 1920. In 1936, big business raised huge funds for Mr. Landon and poured the money in as long as he seemed to have a chance. The old trick didn't work; the money was wasted.

Since 1936, a twofold movement has been in progress. A certain group of business men have tried to worm their way into the New Deal. At the same time, individuals have been going into politics, have themselves been manning their local Republican machines. The clearest example is Governor Baldwin's administration in Connecticut, but the process has been general over much of the North and West. At Philadelphia, these newcomers, these odd fish—the Bruce Bartons, Kenneth Simpsons, Sinclair Weekses—have taken over the party under Mr. Willkie's banner.

At the sight of business men entering politics for the defense of their own group interests, it is easy to cry, "Fascism." But what happened at Philadelphia is not exactly that. It was not Herr Thyssen hiring Hitler and his Brown Shirt hoodlums; it was Herr Thyssen himself stepping forth to harangue the voters. It is conceivable that Mr. Willkie's nomination will lead to the drawing of a sharp line between conservatives and liberals in American politics. The coming campaign may drag conservatives from the Democratic Party to the Republican side, may drive all liberals to the New Deal Democratic camp. For this, Mr. Willkie would deserve well of the Republic.

Philadelphia JONATHAN MITCHELL

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Horse and Buggy Boys

I HAVE BEEN to Philadelphia to look at the Republicans and I am terrified about the future of my country.

Mr. Frank Kent, writing in The Baltimore Sun, says in substance, "What else do you expect from a bunch of politicians? They are always like that." Perhaps I am naïve, but I thought I should see at Philadelphia some evidence of a changed attitude. I have seen national political conventions before. I know the weaknesses of the professional politicians of both—and of all—parties. In normal times I am inured to their peculiarities. I can sit in a room with one or even several of them for hours with hardly a quiver. But these are not normal times. The continent of Europe has just been subjugated by the most ruthless and skillful band of gangsters the world has ever seen. There is at least a chance that the British Empire may be destroyed by them before or shortly after the American national election takes place. The ambitions of these gangsters are worldwide and they have the collaboration of governments almost as ruthless and aggressive as their own. If Britain goes, the United States will be the last big liberal, civilized country in the world, faced by a probable combination of all the gangster states together.

In such a moment partisan politics ought to be adjourned. No man's and no party's ambition should for a moment stand in the way of national preparedness. We have yet to see how the Democrats will behave, but the Republicans have already gone down the drainpipe. I could get no sense whatever that they were aware of what is happening in the world or realized the situation in this country. Just before one of the sessions, newsboys appeared on the steps of the convention hall with papers announcing in big black letters Churchill's statement that England could not rely upon the aid of the French fleet. Hardly any of the delegates bothered to buy a paper; the few who did, glanced at the headline and then went on discussing Dewey's chance of holding his lines firm after the third ballot. The Polish generals predicting last August that they could defeat Hitler's tanks with swords and horses could not have been more fantastically out of touch with reality.

In a dozen ways the delegates to this convention showed that their dominating emotion was hatred—hatred of Roosevelt, hatred of the New Deal, hatred, it almost seemed, of the twentieth century. They didn't boo union labor and collective bargaining, because they knew it was politically inexpedient to do so, but the unuttered boos were plainly in their hearts. This was a middle-class convention determined upon its own version of the class war. It wanted to turn out the Democrats not only in order to recover control of the sources of federal patronage but to restore as far as possible the kind of America that existed in 1920, to say nothing of 1896. If they win this fall, and if the men who were at Philadelphia continue in possession of the party, they will certainly destroy much more of the New Deal than they are now willing to admit in public.

In a sense, of course, whoever is President for the next four years will have the same job to carry out. Most of the nation's energies will have to be spent on the task of building up a vast armament. But there is still a good deal of latitude as to the way in which this is to be done. There is, for example, a choice as to whether we shall try to increase our national income by fifteen or twenty billions annually and take the cost of rearmament out of that increase, or shall leave our income where it is and pay for ships, tanks and planes by a lower standard of living. There is some choice as to the relative severity of taxation on the poor, the middle class and the rich. There is a great deal of choice regarding the treatment of the workers on whom will fall the actual burden of creating our new armament. In Germany, guns are made by slaves. In America they can be made by free men, or we can have numerous gradations between the one condition and the other. I got a strong impression here in Philadelphia that if these delegates had their way, the treatment of labor would move toward the Hitlerian ideal rather than the American one.

The convention paid the New Deal one huge if unintentional compliment. It selected for its presidential nominee the candidate who came nearest to resembling Mr. Roosevelt in personality.

Like the President, Wendell Willkie has a buoyant, sanguine and aggressive character. He, too, has no touch of Hamlet's self-doubt and hesitation. The two men are similar in their quick sense of humor, their intuitive response to the attitudes and emotions of those about them. Both have a sure feeling for the dramatic, for good theatre. Mr. Willkie's carefully tousled hair is matched by the battered white hat the President always wears on shipboard. It is not surprising that Olsen and Johnson, the revue stars, after a single meeting with Willkie, declared their undying allegiance on the sincere, if not too logical, ground that he is "a born actor." To be sure, there are great differences between Willkie and the President as well as great similarities. Willkie seems to me just as typical a big business man in temperament and outlook as Roosevelt is a typical country squire and public servant. Yet the surface resemblances are striking—especially when you think how poles apart are Roosevelt and Robert Taft, a new

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Coolidge from Ohio, or Thomas Dewey, the glacial-blooded Junior G-Man.

As always, I found that the most interesting thing about this convention was the facilities for reporting it. These facilities were about ten times too big. All the political writers, star reporters, leading columnists of the country were there, not because there was any need for them, but because it seemed a little silly to date a daily article from New York or Washington while Philadelphia was going on. Six or eight men could have covered the proceedings nicely; instead, 900 press seats were distributed. The inside story of the convention wasn't told; it never is; but everything else was immediately, with humming speed, written on noiseless typewriters, telegraphed by teletype, photographed for the newsreels, broadcast by radio, scanned by television. There never was such a huge, highly skilled crew of reporters, analysts, radio commentators, photographers, newsreel men, television workers, typists, telegraph operators, linemen, machinists, electricians. The technicians were so far superior to the delegates in brains, knowledge, ability to express themselves and understanding of what was going on that this pathetic and embarrassing contrast was visible to everyone except the delegates themselves, who, naturally, would be the last to notice it. As so often before, you were oppressed by the feeling of a wonderful technical machine given a painfully inadequate product to work upon. . . . Unless our democracy can bring its spiritual content up to the level of its techniques, the chattering teletypes seemed to say, we are lost, lost, regardless of what Hitler may do.

Philadelphia BRUCE BLIVEN

After Abstract Art

IN AN ARTICLE printed recently in The New Republic I announced the death of "abstract art." I implied that the final liquidation of all of these anti-natural movements, in the visual arts, is imminent. At this prospect I was frankly elated. Our "abstract" adventure (I recapitulate) revealed one great objection to high-hatting nature. On the one hand a certain polar emptiness; on the other an, in the long run, equally disconcerting tropical redundance, a romantic excess, is what happens in a visual art when the objective datum of the visual field is abandoned.

So much for the technical obstacles. Quite as noteworthy are the psychological complications—"Difficult painting," like caviar, is a thing of which there cannot be very much: and its consumption, again like that great delicacy, is confined to the plutocratic crust of our society. For an artist, to be "difficult" is either to die or to go to live with Croesus and his satellites in a glittering dreamland. And the contemporary Croesus is, alas, a consummate savage.

Now snobbery *re* the "difficult painter" is indicative of a barbarous *lack* of interest in art: just the same as too exotic dishes suggest enfeeblement of the taste as much as of the appetite. Snobbery does not originate in the studio, but in the salon, of course. The painter can hardly be a snob. All painting—Corot, Chardin or Giotto; Roualt, Rembrandt or Blake—delights him. So it is not in him that the appetite is wanting: although in some societies the painter may be the only man who regards a painting otherwise than as an exhibit, a possession or a counter in a game. Art that is too gamey reveals the presence of an undesirable order of patron, as much as human flesh appearing on a menu would justly be regarded as an outrage by the "Club des Cent" (not to mention anything so suspect and Anglo-Saxon as the Food and Wine Society). And some of the most fashionable painting today has been hung too long.

Seeing how exclusively pictorial art has become an expensive condiment, valued by its barbarous user in proportion to its kick, no wonder "difficult" painting has been compromised, and the whole of painting been shot to pieces economically. From the moment Croesus —ably abetted by the millionaire picture-dealers and fashionable experts—cast his gorgon-eye upon a blank blue canvas, with two pink spots at its center and a scarlet triangle up in one corner—gazed at it bleakly and found it *good*, the doom of all that was not *blank* was sealed.

Then came the Child, with its fascinating scribbles, and the adult that sat at the feet of the Child, and then the inmate of the asylum, with *his* fascinating distortions; and we were all set for a number of decades, if not forever. But politics, seemingly, are coming to our rescue. Such an unlikely instrument as the New Deal, even, has played its part.

Freedom for the painter is what this new dispensation spells—nothing less than freedom; for better or for worse, of course. Freed of the snobbish obligation to excel in oddity, as if they were running a freak-show, all but a decimal percentage of professional painters will breathe freely once more. The dangers inherent in this freedom are obvious. Those in a decimal minority, in a free community, are not always the least endowed. You do not need to tell me that. But before you shudder at the thought of those dangers, you have to inspect very conscientiously the condition of art, as we find it today, and ask yourself what is likely to hap-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pen—or *not* to happen—if that state of affairs endures.

All that our abstract experiment of twenty years ago did for painting, it seems, was to substitute sensationalism for the cultivation of the senses, and to clap down upon the practice of painting a snobbery of the most withering description. The hatred for art in all its forms which is such a characteristic of that well groomed barbarism, the "socialite," and his strange new prompter, the "art-expert," has found in these snob-values the satisfaction of its animus. So we have arrived at the stagnation which we see today.

In this freedom-for-the-painter slogan there is a paradox. For it was in the name of freedom that as abstractionists, or cubists, or what not, we set out to explore beyond nature. Yet the constraint and unfreedom that have provoked what is now happening are very much of a reality. Nature—the nature of Holbein, of Ingres, in distinction to that of the photographer—is not respectable. And such conventions are found cramping by most artists.

That this freedom that is now being won for painters will be used to paint simpering photographs of an obnoxious sweetness, and scenes of an enervating domestic bliss—the kitten playing with the ball of wool, and the child nestling in its mother's lap—is certain. That is what complicates the process, and freezes the hoorah upon our lips.

Here we arrive at the question—since it evidently has become a question everywhere—of what to do next in art, so as to restore painting to its old position of creative mastery: so that it should cease to be a plaything—a joke—of the rich. For several decades it has had the status of a dwarf at the court of a king of Castille. It is surely time it ceased to waddle and grimace at the heels of some scented playboy, or playgirl, and remembered some of the things it had done, better worth doing than that, since it first came on the scene, in Greece and China.

The Federal Artists' Project is now an old, and I am afraid stale, story. It must, I suppose, be allowed, too, that you cannot *stick art onto life:* life itself, and the shells in which life is lived, have to be altered first. Nevertheless, Mr. Roosevelt has done more for the art of painting than any other public man alive, in any country in the world.

His gesture is so entirely unique that it cannot be enough, or long enough, applauded. Why should we complain that the statesman gives too little heed to art, if, when at last the rule is broken, as in the case of Mr. Roosevelt, and a great deal of youthful talent is unearthed, you put yourself on your guard, mobilize all your critical faculties, as if an unworthy attempt had been made to make you an intellectual sucker?

"Post-office art" is, a great deal of it, far better than gallery art. I would much rather go to the Twenty-third Street Post Office in New York City than to most picture exhibitions. Although it is an unnecessarily hideous hall, and the color scheme not of a kind to induce people to linger (and one can see that, in a post office, that had to be guarded against), I never go there to buy a stamp but what I admire some new dexterity or piece of invention on the part of the artist.

As to the type of art, these Federal Artists' Project murals naturally reflect the tendencies of the last few decades. But in a "new deal" for the artist the technical problem is of far less importance than the psychological, or if you like the political. When the state steps in, and throws the doors of its post offices open to the artist, what it is doing more than anything else—and this is generally overlooked, or insufficiently stressed—is taking the destinies of the art of painting out of the hands of the "socialite," the dealer and the expert. That is the thing of capital importance.

The kind of art, as I have remarked, is unimportant. To imitate what is under our eyes; to develop those imitations into generalized (*super-natural*—but not *super-real*) realities; and beyond that, and in a more general way, to care for, and to influence people to observe, the visual amenities, and to banish as far as possible from the visual field all that is degrading or stupid, all that is of trivial or slovenly design and texture: these are great human functions, surely, that people neglect to their cost.

WYNDHAM LEWIS

Winter Landscape

After Breughel

The three men coming down the winter hill
In brown, with tall poles and a pack of hounds
At heel, through the arrangement of the trees,
Past the five figures at the burning straw,
Returning cold and silent to their town,

Returning to the drifted snow, the rink
Lively with children, to the older men,
The long companions they can never reach,
The blue light, men with ladders, by the church
The sledge and shadow in the twilit street

Are not aware that in the sandy time
To come, the evil waste of history
Outstretched, they will be seen upon the brow
Of that same hill: when all their company
Will have been irrecoverably lost,

These men, this particular three in brown
Witnessed by birds will keep the scene and say
By their configuration with the trees,
The small bridge, the red houses and the fire,
What place, what time, what morning occasion

Sent them into the wood, a pack of hounds
At heel and the tall poles upon their shoulders,
Thence to return as now we see them and
Ankle-deep in snow down the winter hill
Descend while three birds watch and the fourth flies.

JOHN BERRYMAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Washington Notes

Mr. Forrestal Moves In

JUST WHAT are we to think about the appointment of Mr. James Forrestal as one of the selfless six with a passion for anonymity—the $10,000-a-year assistants of Mr. Roosevelt? Amid news from Europe and the Republican convention at Philadelphia, it has attracted relatively little attention. But, in the opinion of observers here, it casts a shadow on the whole future of the New Deal in the war-economy phase into which we are entering.

Mr. Forrestal is youngish, dashing, extremely good-looking and charming. Until his appointment to the White House secretariat, he was head of Dillon, Read and Company, Wall Street banking firm whose influence is surpassed only by that of Morgan and Kuhn, Loeb. As such, incidentally, his income has been many times the $10,000 pittance he will now receive.

Several more or less valid excuses may be advanced for his appointment. The selfless six are the intimate personal advisers and messenger boys of Mr. Roosevelt. Here, if anywhere, he should be permitted to choose men congenial to him. Mr. Forrestal's duties will be to act as liaison man between the White House and the federal credit agencies, the RFC, the SEC and the Treasury. Mr. Forrestal is an ex-boy prodigy of Wall Street; undoubtedly his advice will be competent and shrewd. Finally, of all the first-rank investment banking houses, Dillon, Read has come nearest to showing a New Deal leaning.

But, when these things are said, many questions are still unanswered. Just who is to run the rearmament program now getting under way? With the comparatively trivial exception of the navy's shipyards and the army's arsenals, munitions and the other necessary supplies for our armed forces and for England are going to be made by private industry, under the control of private management. At this late date, no other arrangement is realistic. But ultimate control ought to rest with the administration; from Mr. Roosevelt's previous statements, the New Dealers in Washington felt assured that it would rest there. Labor policy, corporate accounting for tax purposes, price stability —these were to be left to the New Dealers' decision.

On its face, Mr. Forrestal's appointment is the most marked step so far taken towards freezing the New Dealers out. Able as Mr. Forrestal undoubtedly is, it is unbelievable to think that it was his brains alone that recommended him to Mr. Roosevelt. Within the ranks of the SEC, Mr. Roosevelt might have had his choice of at least ten men who are sufficiently familiar with the Wall Street deer runs. What Mr. Forrestal has that these SEC employees would have lacked, is long standing personal friendships with top-flight bankers. But just how chummy can the New Deal be with Wall Street and still continue to be the New Deal?

The naming of Mr. Stettinius as head of the raw-materials division of the Defense Advisory Commission has been secretly, but bitterly, criticized in Washington on the ground that Mr. Stettinius is a "Morgan man." Quite clearly the bringing in of Mr. Forrestal is intended to offset any Morgan bias that Mr. Stettinius might represent. But why should the New Deal mix into the trade rivalry of two great Wall Street banking firms? These are deep waters indeed; the administration may find itself in over its head.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

The Republicans Steal FDR's Issue

THOSE WHO THINK the economic problems of a democracy can be examined and settled in a political convention are perhaps excessively sold on the democratic processes. But it is a little disconcerting to find the delegates—and seemingly most of the leaders—to the Republican convention in Philadelphia singularly unconcerned about the economic problems which called for definition and policy.

It was difficult to find delegates or even members of the responsible committee who knew very much about what had been proposed or what was being adopted about such pressing problems as the farm, unemployment, money, national finance. The only thing the resolutions committee and the newspapermen who covered it could get steamed up about was the war plank. The great thing seemed to be to agree with Roosevelt as much as possible while at the same time disagreeing with him as much as possible. The newspaper men hung around the committee for scraps of news about the war plank but seldom or never asked any questions about anything else. Not that questions would have brought them much.

On Wednesday, while the drafting committee was in session, an irate gentleman, attended by a committee, arrived at the door of the drafting committee room. He was the chairman of the important Minnesota delegation and he was thoroughly steamed up. He pounded on the door, asked for a committeeman, and when the committeeman was not forthcoming, declared for all and sundry to hear that the Minnesota delegation wanted to know what was being done about the farm business, demanded a hearing and added ominously that unless satisfactory assurance was forthcoming on the farm plank at once there were fourteen delegations prepared to caucus and issue an ultimatum.

This struck me as a piece of news. Half a dozen newsies remained sitting utterly uninterested hard by. I called attention to the implications but it scarcely seemed to lift an eyelid. A moment before a hysterical lady hammered on the door and in loud voice shouted she wanted to see John Lord O'Brian about some plank she was interested in. The reporters leaped to their feet at the sound of a female voice raised in threat. But the possibility of a farm caucus of fourteen agricultural states in defiance of the platform-makers lacked sex appeal.

And thus, an hour before the platform in its final form was released to the press, no one knew what it would contain, what the general position would be on a group of vital problems and no one cared.

But despite these obscurities it is possible to see fairly clearly just how the drive against Roosevelt is going to take shape. He is going to be denounced with increasing vehe-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mence as a warmonger. This note was strong as the convention met; it grew in intensity. Next, the war scares he has been industriously cultivating for the last two years and particularly in the last six months are now to be turned against him. This is meat and drink to Republicans. They have always been more chauvinistic than Democrats. Flag-waving comes naturally to them. And they have the old banner now, are holding it aloft and calling all true Americans to rally around "their flag," because it is in danger.

The President played with fire when he started the spy scares, submarine scares, South American invasion scares, air-raid scares. The Republicans have seized upon this psychosis and play as a trump card the "helpless" condition of the Americas. Liberals were denouncing Roosevelt for spending so much on his beloved navy and he was busy whipping up propaganda for these expenditures. And he succeeded so well that now the Republicans are denouncing him for spending too little and are reminding the people that the Republican Party is the traditional party of defense. This is to be played ceaselessly—historic Democratic opposition to defense spending, Democratic denunciation of Republican spending, the failure of America to arm in a world on fire—the fire having been well advertised by Roosevelt. And finally the utter incapacity of Democratic dreamers to build national defense. It is a job for sound Republican business men.

Next the President's fifth-column activities are to be turned against him. The Dies Committee having started the ball, the President took it up as part of the machinery for encouraging hysteria when France was overrun. And now the Republicans have a favorite weapon, only the fifth column with them is the New Dealers.

All the other great economic and social issues which they had been talking about so glibly have now taken a different form. The New Deal and its experiments are to be cast out because "they weaken our defense." In short, the Republicans have now taken the defense ball and propose to run with it until the President can down them.

But so far as a fair, reasoned, sober analysis of the economic issues in the situation are concerned—taken by themselves—that just wasn't around. Making America strong now is to make her strong for war. It looks as if both parties will now set about building that greatly needed industry—the war industry. Can anyone doubt it? This writer humbly forecast this development as early as 1937. It has descended upon us now with lightning speed. Apparently nothing can stop us from sliding into an armament economy as a basis of our industrial stabilization. The great government-owned industry which can be expanded or contracted as needed is here. What else has arrived with it remains to be seen.

As for the candidates, they raced with each other to see who was most for preparedness, weapon building and the casting of Hitler out of the New World. The problem of spending is now solved for the Republicans. These gentlemen who have been denouncing Roosevelt for pouring out billions would have had to quit it if they won but for all this war hysteria. They can now continue to denounce Roosevelt for spending and, if they come into power, continue to spend in even greater volume by merely spending on ships instead of on schools, roads, playgrounds or hospitals.

JOHN T. FLYNN

The Storm and the Circus

"THE MORTAL STORM" is done with high purpose and some of the vast reservoir of Hollywood skills; it is also one of the few pictures to translate a large modern problem into the motion of theatre and of cameras. But possibly because of story exigencies and certainly because of the absence of picture genius, it is not one of the exciting films. The only creative technical thing about it is in the editing, where there is advance in the use of the overlap-dissolve to carry action. And its large events seem to demand a story either with more sweep in general or with more intensity in the particular. Its topical verity and poignance are both real; but it adds up to light romantic tragedy, ending rather conveniently with one party member revolting against what he has seen and the audience more aware of what goes on without being much nearer to it than they are, say, to the court proceedings of Pontius Pilate.

It is the story of an independent German farmer and his rockbound mother, the girl he loved and her father—a non-Aryan professor slated for the concentration camp. It is a story of simple, kindly people suddenly faced with and trampled upon by the local hoodlums rising with the Nazi Party. It happens in the film as it must have happened to thousands of people, inevitably, leaving no answer. Margaret Sullavan, James Stewart, Frank Morgan and Ouspenskaya are fine in their part of it: while the picture is on they seem to live there, nice people. But some of the others are either miscast (Robert Young as a stern party man) or given to reciting lines as though they were reciting lines (Irene Rich). And in the end, the purely theatrical element seems to have won out. The picture tugs at the heartstrings as it passes and brings up its evidence from life dutifully; but there is an oversimplification all the way through and a flat taste after it is over that leave it floating—a good and needed job, but with no well lodged anchor in the memory.

You have read, on about this page in The New Republic, Carlton Brown's notes on the Circus in its first Madison Square Garden splendor. Mr. B. told you all about it. But I have just caught the show in its second month on the road. As an irregular and junior buff I submit that a circus starts when the cars are shunted into the siding at just daylight, and ends when the hoarse whistle for Off Brakes comes over the sleeping town from the yards, along about three the next morning; and that there was never anything under a tent so fascinating as the business of getting it up and knocking it down, unloading and loading back up, wagons and elephants and truly the most intricate and smoothly ordered job of rigging known to the world.

Even as shaken down for the long summer grind, the new Ringling-Barnum-Bailey is a show to put an end to all others. You never saw such a tent, nobody did; nobody ever saw so many elephants outside of Kipling; they have a tiger that stretches down the block and around a corner, a lion who roars a little just to keep in practice and all the air in the big tent shakes gently; and they have the best acts, high, low and flying, that money can buy, and clowns all over the place. Sometimes it's a furor, sometimes a ballet, sometimes your hands sweat freely and sometimes it's an expensive bore. But always the show that is the true circus goes on underneath, the scene-shifters for the biggest show

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

on earth working their quick miracles with rope and planks and metal—outside a sailing ship, the best example I have seen or heard of, of many men making haste and speed too.

They played a one-day pitch in Worcester at the old Fair Grounds, coming down from a day in Portland, Maine, which was so cold and rainy it must have lodged in the bones. The night I saw them, sitting within a hundred yards of where at the age of five I missed most of my first Ringling show from being flat under my father's knees after the first clown fired the first horse pistol, the whole troupe was low. Horses lashed out with their heels and nipped each other; the back-somersault Christiani couldn't make it in three tries; likewise the gentleman on the low tight-rope; the balancing darling of Europe came so near losing it you could see the wrinkles in the make-up fifty yards down and away, and one of the teeter-board jumping acts got so tangled up with a false landing that there was all hell and seven men in the air at the wrong time and place. Throughout the season, I imagine, the greeting in the dressing tent for anyone who lands on her cookie out front will be, "Where do you think we're playing, Worcester?" But this great arena, seats $1 to $1.75, was jammed once again and, as the first sets were being loaded in the cars for New Haven, the crowd worked slowly out through the main exit, the midway and the mud, quite happy. Because it was the circus, which is more than the sum of its parts, more than the clowns and animals and Flying Concellos. It is a rite more than a show, as immense as your first double-header freight around the curve and as much a mystery today as, suddenly, your first elephant, fantastic and serene, promised but only half believed, above the familiar traffic of Main Street.

OTIS FERGUSON

A Communication

The Case for War Now

SIR: The last best hope of defending America lies in an immediate declaration of war against Germany and Italy by the Congress of the United States. Nothing less offers promise of averting the Fascist conquest of all the Western world. Nothing less will enable Americans to find the means of America's salvation.

War now will not magically create weapons and goods to save Britain and defend America. But the emotional impact of war now, both here and abroad, will change the shape of the world crisis and move Americans to relevant action. The enemy has demonstrated that material resources for defense (or aggression) can be produced and used effectively only when the psychic energies of the whole community are mobilized for a single end. For failing to act on this premise France is dead and Britain is in mortal danger. If America fails to act upon it America will suffer a similar fate. Action is needed—not in November or next year, when it will be much too late to act, but now. Action now requires war now.

This is so because no other word possesses equal power to stir American minds and hearts. In law and in diplomacy, "war," "peace" and "neutrality" have alike become meaningless, since the totalitarian Caesars regard war as normal, neutrality as impossible and peace as an opportunity to pursue the ends of war by other and often more effective means. But in the stereotypes of democratic peoples, neutrality and peace spell passivity and war spells action. In contemporary *Weltpolitik* passivity means defeat and action means survival and possible victory. "Non-belligerency" is a negative term which leaves all men cold. Only "war" strikes fire. Americans still react to its appeal with the responses which are requisite for salvation. War means unity and devotion. War means faith. War means service and sacrifice in the common interest.

These responses on a mass scale are essential to the effective rearmament of the Republic, to the rescue of Latin America, to the economic and social reformation of the nation for national defense. Any other word or deed which evoked comparable psychological results would suffice as well. But none other suffices. No "moral equivalent" of war is at our disposal. Only the prompt launching of an armed crusade against the fascist tyrants will meet the issue.

The physical unreadiness of America to wage war abroad renders immediate war more imperative, not less so. America will forever remain unready to fight even at home unless it renders itself emotionally ready to fight now. America must wage war abroad now if it is ever to be able to wage war at home later with any chance of success. Psychology, strategy and the stream of events demonstrate anew that the best defense is attack. To await attack by the enemy is to invite demoralization and defeat. Even if Britain is beaten and all Europe, Africa and Asia are lost, despite American efforts, the waging of war now would leave America a year or two hence far better prepared to meet the threat to come in this hemisphere than any present alternative course. War now will not defeat the Axis this year or next. It may offer no ultimate certainty of military victory over the Fascist Triplice on other continents. But it offers the only hope of saving the Americas from fascism within and of preparing the Americas to resist future Fascist attack from without.

Peace now will breed disasters far graver than the Nazi conquest of the British Isles and the Nazi-Fascist partition of the British and French empires. Britain must surrender all, including her colonies and her fleet, if Churchill's coming appeal to America is answered as Reynaud's appeal of June 15 was answered. The fall of Britain will carry with it consequences which are easily predictable. One will be the collapse of China, the loss of the East Indies and Philippines and the enforced surrender by the United States of all territories and interests west of Hawaii. Another will be the rapid domination of most of Latin America by the conquerors—not at first by force of arms but by propaganda and by fifth columns and by the need of Latin America for European markets which will be controlled by the conquerors and will be used by them to control Latin America. Still another will be the emergence of a hostile coalition, with naval tonnage outweighing that of the United States four to one and with shipbuilding and armament industries outweighing those of the United States ten to one. Therewith will vanish the three cornerstones of American for-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

eign policy: isolation, the Open Door and the Monroe Doctrine. Therewith America will find itself almost completely helpless in a world of enemies.

The most catastrophic result of peace now, however, will touch the United States within its own frontiers. That result will be internal decay. Fear and cupidity will breed demands for "appeasement." The Triplice will supplement its familiar technique of blackmail and threats with adroit appeals for acceptance of the "new world order" and clever blandishments of trade opportunities with a "united Europe" and a "pacified Asia." These maneuvers will be coupled with renewed slogans of anti-communism, probably implemented and rendered more plausible by armed assault upon the USSR. Many Americans will cry peace even at the cost of successive Munichs. With all Europe, Asia, Africa and much of Latin America in enemy hands, the risks of any alternative course will soon appear too appalling to contemplate. "Peace with honor" and "peace for our time" will devastate America as they devastated Western Europe during the five years preceding the "kill." A dispirited electorate, crushed and impoverished by futile armaments and the disorganization of foreign trade, will prefer surrender to the cost of continued resistance. Domestic fanatics and foreign agents will spread division and disunion. Efforts will be made to hold Mexico and the Caribbean by force. Such efforts will drive all Latin Americans, oligarchs and democrats alike, into Hitler's arms. The end of this process will be belated war and certain defeat or the gradual reduction of the United States to an impotent congeries of conflicting factions lacking unity or energy for any common action at home or abroad.

No one familiar with the steps by which the European democracies were done to death will dismiss this picture as gloomy fantasy or argue that oceans or arms or riches or any other advantages enjoyed by America offer any hope of arresting the process here. In the absence of a national rededication to the defense of American democracy, this process will go on to its end. It can be averted only by war now, accompanied by universal conscription, the full mobilization of industry and the consecration of the people of the United States to the most difficult task in their history.

Despite present unpreparedness, moreover, there is little reason for pessimism regarding the military aspects of the enterprise if the internal regeneration of the Republic is accompanied by a flexible and farsighted program of economic and naval action abroad. Such a program offers hope of victory once the paralysis of "neutrality" and "non-belligerency" is overcome. A few fundamentals can be set forth at once.

1. The United States must accompany its declaration of war with a new Good Neighbor policy toward Latin America. That policy must renounce all use of force to protect American corporations or nationals and must make it clear that the armed power of the United States will be used in the south only against the common enemy. That policy must invite (but not compel) the Latin American republics to become co-belligerents. It must include genuinely reciprocal and democratic procedures, free of all suspicion of Yankee domination, for the disposal of the export surpluses of the Latin American nations. It must aim at the promotion of commerce in consumers' goods and at an eventual Pan-American customs union. It must rely less upon formal collaboration with governments than upon the active development of strong ties of sympathy and mutual interest with the democratic masses of the south. Without the latter the former will prove futile. No part of Latin America can be saved by the United States either by gold or by arms unless the United States uses its naval power to blockade Fascist Europe and uses its wealth, wisdom and good will to win the Latin republics to the common defense of democracy and continental security in the Western world.

2. The United States, without giving up its formal rights, must temporarily renounce all military commitments in the Far East and must strive by all means at its disposal to keep Japan neutral. If Japan fights, the United States must content itself with long-range blockade operations and the defense of Alaska, Hawaii and the west coast of Latin America by a skeleton fleet and air force.

3. The United States must concentrate its fleet and its merchant marine in the Atlantic. No "two-ocean" navy completed in 1946 will meet today's emergency. The enemy will not wait for its completion. America must use all the naval and economic resources at its disposal now to blockade Germany and Italy and to save the British Isles from starvation and invasion. It must do its utmost, by expeditionary forces if need be, to save Greenland, Iceland, Ireland, the Azores, the Canaries, the Cape Verde Islands and the western coast of Africa from Nazi-Fascist control, for these are the keys to Canada and to South America below the "bulge."

4. The United States must make terms with Moscow if there is the slightest possibility of awakening the Kremlin leaders from the self-hypnosis induced by their own obsolete theology. America and Russia are the only Great Powers able to combat the Triplice. If they fight side by side, Russia by land and America by sea, each can win safety. If either keeps peace with the conquerors in the hope that security will be had by deflecting aggression against the other, each will be separately destroyed. In the shorter run Soviet intervention may be essential to save Britain. America can have no effective army or air fleet capable of going into action in the British Isles for a year at least. Britain's peril is imminent. Only the Soviet Union can draw the Nazi air squadrons and armies away from the Channel by invading Prussia and bombing central Germany. Stalin, to be sure, has already outchamberlained Chamberlain. If he is indeed committed to the fatal blunder of isolationist neutrality and passive defense, if he is therewith bent upon the destruction of the Soviet Union at Hitler's hands, no action by America will move him from his suicidal course. But if, as is still possible, Moscow takes up arms to save itself, then America and the Soviet Union must coördinate their war plans in order to attack the foe on both flanks.

Such steps as these offer hope of survival and of victory. Any steps short of these and any steps "short of war" threaten ultimate defeat. It may well be that American opinion and the exigencies of election render any such program as this "politically impossible." If so, the consequences of inaction or half-action will not thereby be changed. The rulers of the Third Reich have never limited their goals to what seemed politically possible.

The world now faces either a Fascist peace or a new Napoleonic era. The United States can save itself and help to

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

save Great Britain only by playing the role that Great Britain played in the first Napoleonic era—that of waging war with goods and gold and battleships and rallying the conquered to rebellion against the conqueror. If it does not play that role, the new Napoleons will be masters of the planet. The Soviet Union can save itself only by playing the role of Tsarist Russia in the first Napoleonic era. Alexander in 1807, like Stalin in 1939, sought to appease the aggressor and deflect him westward. Stalin in 1940, like Alexander in 1812, must take up arms if Russia is to survive. Washington can rally the American republics to the cause. Moscow can rally the peoples of the Balkans and the Near East. A new Grand Alliance can strangle the Fascist economies and provoke revolt among the vanquished. A new Great Coalition can ultimately crush the foe, as Bonaparte was crushed at Leipzig and Waterloo. Nothing less than this will serve. Nothing less than war now, declared and waged by America with all the huge resources and high resolve at America's disposal, will save America from the fate which fortune reserves for those who wait too long.

Williamstown, Mass. FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

Comment on Mr. Schuman's article will be found in the editorial section. – THE EDITORS

The Bandwagon

Prince Konoye himself has liberal ideas. They were shown by his sending his eldest son to Princeton. – *From The New York Times.*

I believe that our Governor, Arthur H. James, is Republican presidential timber, because a man whose simple virtues are demonstrated by the fact he wears long underwear and high-top shoes all the year round is the man the White House needs in this crisis. – *G. Albert Stewart, Pennsylvania secretary of Forests and Waters, quoted in The New York Post.*

Paris this June is like a resort. Everyone in shirt-waist dresses. – *Caption in the June (1940) issue of Vogue.*

The bill designated H. R. 10013 also would relieve underwriters of the severe civil liberties imposed by the Securities Act. – *From a Washington dispatch to The New York Times.*

Get Together, Boys.—E. H.

Miss Long, middle-aged, white-haired, says she's descended from American Revolutionists, denies she is a Communist but refused to sign the no-ism oath prescribed for WPA workers. She was dismissed at once. Her case may be first to test constitutionality of the law.—J. A. W. – *PM, June 26, page 15, column 3.*

By last night about 15 percent of the 106,000 WPA workers in the city had signed the required oath that they advocated no ism. There have been no refusals to sign yet: few are expected.—A. L. – *PM, June 26, page 15, column 4.*

Good Neighbor à la Cucaracha

And it wouldn't hurt to smack Mexico down. If we fought there we'd be getting valuable battle experience like the Spanish campaigns that helped both Germans and Italians in fighting technique. – *F. Van Wyck Mason, quoted in an interview in The Cleveland Press.*

When Is a Party Not a Party?

This committee [to Defend America by Aiding the Allies] is completely non-partisan. The majority of its members, in fact, are Republicans. – *Chester Rowell in The San Francisco Chronicle.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

Correspondence

This Summer, This England

SIR: News of the fall of Paris came to us yesterday. Since then we have been walking in a nightmare. The twin and savage dangers of invasion-plus-air-blitzkrieg and increasing-food-shortage-plus-disorganization-of-trade—these two dangers are suddenly very obvious to us, but even they, for the moment, have hardly any validity at all. At worst, for this moment anyhow, they seem only like a bad dream from which you must awake to a mortal sickness.

This may seem like exaggeration, but it isn't; it is understatement. People like us may feel *in more ways* the tremendous thing that has happened, the Germans (and Nazis at that) in Paris. But everyone in England feels it in one or two ways, and it is a terrific shock.

You'd be totally wrong, however, if you thought that this means everyone here is depressed or defeatist. I don't believe that in the course of this war so far they have ever been less of either. It is natural, of course, to turn strongly when you're at bay; natural, too, to believe that when *you* get a chance you'll know how to take it—and these two feelings predominate. There's not much of the "calmness" we are told about, though. Apathy before and urgency now is more accurate.

There is—or there was until Reynaud's appeal and Roosevelt's speech—considerable feeling against the U.S.A. I'm not sure whether that is serious really; I don't believe it is. It is mostly confined to the rich and silly classes, who are so used to having *someone* to ward off the nastiest assaults of fortune that they, quite genuinely, feel extremely hurt if anything threatens to hit them. Some very young soldiers, just back from Belgium, fish for trout from my garden. One of them said, "The Yanks won't come in this time. Can't blame 'em." Another said, "No one wants to—don't believe the Russians will, and Italy wouldn't have if they hadn't been afraid of old Hitler." They didn't show any rancor about Italy, but some shrewd sense about the danger to us from her submarines and air forces, and the fact that Italian soldiers, even if they are as bad as we're told, could be used as police for the captured countries, releasing German troops for France and us. Most of the people of their kind and age are as reasonable as this, I fancy. It is tragic and heart-sickening to know that most of them will be killed or incapacitated.

Judging by these boys, blitzkrieg badly hurts even the ones it doesn't seem to get. They are shaken. That is putting it mildly. Worse luck, I mustn't tell you anything of what they told me, because we have now a maze of recent laws which make it a punishable offense (and heavily punishable at that) to say anything which might depress anyone. So that I was in the strange position of actually wishing that they weren't anxious to talk. That is only partly true, of course; no writer could possibly wish not to hear, nor could any human being possibly refuse them the small comfort of a listener. But I had to advise them not

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to talk too much, too freely. And that is a strange thing to have to do.

One thing I am sure I am allowed to tell you is what the boy of nineteen told me: because it was late evening and the nightingales were singing and he was alone in the garden he had become for the first time softened from the rigidity which he'd worn since he got back, and he broke out without any preamble, "They bombed and bombed us, across and back and across and back. We couldn't do a thing to those dive-bombers. We just lay on our faces. I heard one come down"—and he gave a far too good imitation of the noise it made—"and I cried. I did really. Couldn't help it. I thought we were done, but it hit further along, on another shed. What a picking-up . . . what a picking-up!"

I didn't say anything and he said, "The refugees was the worst of all. They'd be going along a road and the Jerries just came along in tanks and all, and they—do you know what they did? They burnt them, with fire and flame-throwers. They burnt living people. They did. I saw them." And he wept and shook.

He said, "I'm too young to see things like that. I couldn't seem to stand it. But what got the men with families was the children. Not being able to do anything at all."

The whole time (he stood there for an hour almost) was like that. I don't know what one says to that. In Spain, oddly enough, I did know what to say. Partly perhaps because of having few words of Spanish anyway, and it's easier then. But there was another difference.

Meanwhile—life goes on. I heard a conversation, just across the river from my window, the other evening. Two of these boys were fishing with a piece of string and a lump of cheese, and the old man who hires the fishing on that side came up to them and said, "No, no! You can't do that sort of thing, y'know! That's private fishing. It costs a lot of money! You can't fish here—sorry, but there it is. Now, off with you."

I beckoned to them and they came over and that is how, each night now, rows of people fish opposite the old gentleman. So if I'm jailed, you will know what it is for. I suppose it is making the old gentleman depressed—and that's punishable with three months and fifty pounds. I haven't got fifty pounds, so I suppose it would be twelve months.

Frome Vauchurch, England VALENTINE ACKLAND

The Right to Strike

SIR: Regarding your editorial "National Defense and the Labor Board" [June 17]. Will you please tell a badly pressed union organizer just how the hell a union goes about collective bargaining when the *right* to strike has been denied it?

Perhaps you'll also be good enough to furnish the names of the great trade unions in this country which, at some time or another, have not had to resort to the exercise of that right.

Someone, some day, just once, ought to steal up softly to the "liberals" and whisper the correct time into their collective ears. (And it ought to be told to Bliven as well as to Johnny-get-your-gun Mumford—who, by the way, hasn't enlisted yet, so far as I've heard.)

These are the same "liberals," aren't they, who are fond of reading lectures on "progressive trade unionism" to the nation's labor leaders?

Did someone say something about a "stab in the back"?

Baltimore, Md. BRENDAN SEXTON

[The editorial was directed at defending an effective National Labor Relations Board against reactionary congressmen. It did not advocate denying the right to strike, but said unions would have to forgo strikes, in exchange for the minimum essential that collective bargaining be recognized. Many a successful union has grown and flourished on this principle, at least for long periods, once its power had been established. During the last war, governmental mediation in the interest of continued production enabled labor to secure and extend its rights, wherever it was organized. – THE EDITORS]

More About MacLeish

SIR: I have never read a New Republic article with more interest than Archibald MacLeish's recent "Post-war Writers and Pre-war Readers" [June 10], and I have seldom read an article in The New Republic or in any other magazine with which I have been as little inclined to agree. Whether one believes or not, as I do, that when the going is rough liberals usually melt like snow in summer sunshine, I do not see how anyone can fail to be sensible of the irony and effrontery which such an indictment as Mr. MacLeish feels impelled to make must necessarily carry.

However strong an imagination any man may have or however generous and sensitive he may be, I do not believe that he can even remotely realize, if he has led a comfortable life himself, just how bitter and stormy the world really was for those youngsters who came of age in the thirties. It wasn't necessary for any of them to read Dos Passos and Hemingway to know that they had been taken in; their own eyes and feelings and instincts were enough, if they had sense, to show them just how much Liberty and Democracy had come to be watered down for them.

I do not think that Mr. MacLeish need despair of the young generation in this country. It will probably still fight Democracy's battle one more time if it has to. But the saving remnant of that generation who prefer to fight for democracy without the capital D is larger now than it has ever been in the past, and that remnant is just about the only hope this old world has.

Ventura, Calif. LOUISE DAVIES

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Mrs. Catherine C. Warren of Washington, D. C., asks us among other things: "Have you considered that Lord Lothian is in this country to form a Cliveden Set?" Her advice is, throw him back. . . . G. Epprecht of Warren Point, New Jersey, says he has no more respect for Mussolini's martial spirit than we have, but that our uncritical acceptance of Mr. Roosevelt's "stab-in-the-back" pronouncement overlooks the fact that men in high places and not too sound an international record (v. Spain) should choose their words and tough accents more carefully.

The Independent Committee for Thomas and Krueger reports some minor-party electoral troubles that might be looked into generally. In order to get Socialist names on the ballot in September the party is compelled to get thousands of petitionary names from every county in the state of New York, including those most Republican and sparsely settled. Even in the case of the many volunteers who will work through the summer on this job, party funds aren't adequate to meet the natural expenses. Help will be gratefully received at 276 Fourth Avenue, New York City.

Checks for the Letterbox.– John Dewey, as president of the LID, announces an essay contest for college students, with prizes of $100, $75 and $50. "Absence of jobs and the security that goes with them has been one great cause of the growth of totalitarian states," Mr. Dewey points out; and the subject of the essay is "Jobs and Freedom: How Can America Provide Both?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books in Review

Poet in Wartime

IN A SENSE the title "Wartime Letters" [1] is a misnomer; less than half were written before the Armistice, and even these cannot be said to be *about* the War. If one defines experience as that which illuminates the understanding and releases the creative power, then for Rilke the War was no experience at all. For some, like Wilfred Owen, it was the decisive experience of their lives; but then they were combatants. For Rilke those four years were a negative and numbing horror that froze his poetic impulse, a suspension of the intelligible. For a week or two at its outset he was seized by the "phenomenon of the War God," and threw himself "into that suddenly set-up and opened universal heart," but disillusion came immediately. The agony and death that any war involves were fearful enough, but what seemed to him even more dreadful was "that the pressure of it has nowhere contributed to bringing man out more distinctly, to forcing him—the individual or the mass—face to face with God, as great tribulations in earlier times had the power to do." All that Rilke could do was to refuse to be a newspaper reader, to spend the time "waiting in Munich, always thinking it *must* come to an end, not understanding, not understanding. *Not to understand:* yes, that was my entire occupation in these years."

To call this an ivory-tower attitude would be a cheap and wicked lie. To resist compensating for the sense of guilt that every noncombatant feels at not sharing the physical sufferings of those at the front, by indulging in an orgy of patriotic hatred all the more violent because it is ineffective; to be conscious but to refuse to understand, is a positive act that calls for courage of a high order. To distinguish it from selfish or cowardly indifference may at the time be difficult for the outsider, but Rilke's poetry and these letters are proof enough of his integrity and real suffering, which made it seem to him "arbitrary and untrue to have recourse to a tree, a field, the clemency of evening, for what did the tree, the field, the existing landscape know of this hapless, devastating, killing human being?"

Now in this second and even more dreadful war, there are few writers to whom we can more profitably turn, not for comfort—he offers none—but for strength to resist the treacherous temptations that approach us disguised as righteous duties. The acts required of our bodies vary with our individual capacities or circumstances; the attitude demanded of our minds is the same for all: that each of us "shall, in his own little spot, plant a small hope that, whatever the political and military tasks in which we may have to take a part, we shall not forget that true revolution is 'the conquering of abuses for the benefit of the deepest tradition.' "

Few have refuted better Hitler's cry, "Yes, we are barbarians." "If man would only cease to invoke the cruelty in Nature to excuse his own. He forgets how infinitely innocently even the most terrible happens in Nature; she does not watch it happen—she hasn't the perspective for that; she *is* wholly in the most dreadful, even her fruitfulness is in it, her generosity—because she contains *everything*, she contains the cruel too—but man, who will never be able to encompass everything, is never sure, when he chooses the terrible—let us say murder—of already containing the opposite of this abyss, and so his choice, in the very moment of making him an exception, condemns him to be an isolated, one-sided creature who is no longer connected with the whole."

Few saw more clearly the peculiar layers to which the intellectual in a revolutionary epoch like the present is exposed: "He of all people knows how slowly the changes of lasting significance are accomplished . . . how Nature, in her constructive zeal, hardly anywhere lets intellectual forces come to the fore. And yet on the other hand, it is the same intellectual who, by force of his insight, grows impatient when he sees in what miscarried and muddled conditions human things are content and persist." And in a today which, in reaction against esthetic dilettantism, substitutes a political dilettantism that is every whit as much a product of fear and conceit, few have defined the artist's duty more clearly: "Productivity . . . even the most fertile, only serves to create a certain inner constant, and perhaps art amounts to so much only because certain of its purest creations give guarantee for the achievement of a more reliable inner attitude. . . ."

Once again Mrs. Norton and her husband have put us all in their debt.

I am not scholar enough to make a just criticism of Mr. MacIntyre's translations of fifty poems[1] selected from "Das Buch der Bilder" and "Die Neue Gedichte." He has, wisely in my opinion, allowed himself the license of assonance and half-rhyme in order to be as literal as possible. Some of his phrases puzzle me. I cannot see why for "*die dich nicht sieht. Du müsst dein Leben ändern,*" he should give us, "when you can hide now. You must change your life," considering that a literal rendering of the first half of the line can be made without sacrificing the rhythm.

Further, one could wish that, whatever his personal opinion of the "Duineser Elegien" and "Die Sonette an Orpheus," he had not seen fit, in his introduction and notes, to adopt a kind of tough-guy-no-nonsense tone which accords singularly ill with his subject. But one should be grateful for every attempt to make Rilke's poetry better known, and some at least of the translations, *e. g.*, of "Eine von den Alten," "Der Alchimist," "Die Gazelle," "Aus einer Sturmnacht," seem to me excellently done. The following version of "Ein Frauenschicksal," despite some

[1] The Wartime Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke: 1914-1921. Translated by M. D. Herder Norton. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 279 pages. $2.50.

[1] Fifty Selected Poems of Rainer Maria Rilke. Translated by C. F. MacIntyre. Berkeley: University of California Press. 160 pages. $2.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

doubtful points, does manage, I think, to convey some sense of the extraordinary insight of this great poet who refused to "understand" hate and destruction:

> Even as a king out hunting seized a glass,
> something to drink from—any glass, no matter—
> and someone after that in a sure place
> put the slight thing away, to guard it better:
>
> thus destiny, which also has a thirst,
> picked up this woman, drank of her till slaked,
> and afterward some trivial fellow durst
> not put her to her use, for fear she break
>
> and stuck her in that careful cupboard where
> one cherishes all costly things and rare
> (or things that people fancy have some worth).
>
> And there she stood, as strange as something loaned,
> slowly growing merely old and blind,
> and was not prized and never rare on earth.

W. H. AUDEN

Canada Next

Canada: America's Problem, by John MacCormac. New York: The Viking Press. 287 pages. $2.75.

THE THESIS that the war will result in a transfer of British power from the United Kingdom to the dominions across the seas, advanced by me in The New Republic for May 27, is supported in this book. Mr. MacCormac, a Canadian for many years correspondent for The New York Times in the Dominion, sees three possibilities: (1) that the decisive defeat of England and France will "automatically result in Canada's independence under American auspices"; (2) that "should Britain emerge from a long, exhausting and indecisive war, not defeated but so weakened that she must decline to the status of a second-rate power . . . Canada might assume a larger importance in the British Empire but the Empire would have less importance in the world"; and (3) that "Britain and France may win decisively but that Britain, as a result of war experience, may elect to base her Empire in the Western Hemisphere . . . [and] continue to insert a long finger in the world's pies." Whatever happens, Canadian-American relations are bound to be revolutionized and Mr. MacCormac's purpose is not only to explore possible results of the war to Canada but to provide Americans with an understanding of Canada and Canadians.

Of course, as he points out, Canada is a problem to the United States today. She is taking an active part in Europe's war, launching an attack on Germany from this continent, but is presumably protected from attack in return by the Monroe Doctrine. This is not only ambiguous; it can become dangerous as well. But as Mr. MacCormac goes on to say, it is as nothing compared with the post-war possibilities. As an American ward, Canada will be a problem in so far as the North American continent is threatened by an aggressor, though it will simply mean translating a theoretical into an actual problem, for we have already promised to defend the country. Should Canada gain increased power within the Commonwealth, it will mean that the North American elements in her policy will come to the fore and influence the entire British world, an upshot Americans will welcome. If, however, the seat of Empire should be transferred to Canada, the United States would be confronted with a difficult situation, for if British and American policies clashed outside the continent, they might clash on it as well, to the disaster of all parties. A transfer of the British imperial base to Canada might be a calamity for the United States.

Meanwhile Mr. MacCormac asks us to take note that the Canadians are a "diverse and divided population inhabiting a country cursed with sectionalism." They are British and they are French; they are Protestant and they are Catholic. They live in four conflicting regions, the Maritime Provinces, the St. Lawrence industrial region (which is also the home of the French peasantry), the Prairie Provinces, and British Columbia across the Rockies. These are but imperfectly tied together by an artificial east-west axis. Moreover, Canada is subjected to three additional pulls, that of the United Kingdom, that of the United States and that of a strictly Canadian nationality. Mr. MacCormac's exposition of these matters is lucid and satisfying. He shows how they result in the complex which is Canada, in politics, economics and culture. He is so utterly frank that he tempts the lightning of the pro-British imperialists. It will strike, without a doubt.

It seems to me, though, that he disposes of the other dominions too summarily. It is not enough to say that if Britain goes down, they go down too. Other dominions than Canada have a chance to survive, even if nowhere near so good a one. That is their tragedy. In their uncritical devotion to Britain they accentuate it. They desperately need clear-sighted and tough-hided publicists like Mr. MacCormac.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

Broken Teacups

The English Air, by D. E. Stevenson. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 317 pages. $2.50.

ALL THE INGREDIENTS are here for a powerful novel: a dynamic and of-this-moment setting (England during the war of nerves and the real war that followed); a chief character in whom is crystallized the essential clash of two countries, two cultures; romance and adventure (for example, the hero's escape from Germany). Yet the book falls flat, not because it is not true, but because it is not true enough. The errors are all sins of omission. This does not mean that it is not a pleasant book, written with sympathy and love for the inhabitants of an English village caught up in the war. But one expects more than this from such potentially dramatic material.

Young Franz, son of a loyal German Nazi and an English mother (now dead), pays a visit to his English relatives in a serene English village. It is his task to master the language, study the manners of the people, their characteristics as a nation, acquaint his father with his findings, and eventually return to Germany as a member of the secret service. The plot is his conversion—all too rapid to be credible—from National Socialism to the English way of life. This conversion follows immediately on the heels of Hitler's "betrayal" of the Munich pledge, and the emphasis is almost wholly on the broken word of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

leader. Until then the boy's only disloyalties had been a fleeting suspicion hastily put aside that Nazi youth picnics had been too regimented to be fun and too productive of promiscuity, that the English were not so bad as the Nazis had painted them, and that the tranquility of English village life was delightful. It is precisely at this point that the weakness is most evident, for Franz admires such things as the Englishman's reticence and his casual attitude toward his government, his muddling-through (which seems to him to cloak a surprising subsurface efficiency), or afternoon tea with congenial friends. He has no real comprehension of what he is renouncing or what he is adopting—no retrospective horror or reasoned hope in a democratic future, but only anger at the "betrayal," the broken pledge. True, the boy, filled with personal shame for his country, returns to Germany to hurl himself into anti-Nazi underground activities, escapes back to England (and his sweetheart), and plans some day to help create a new Germany out of the ashes of the old—that is, if there are going to be any ashes to form the foundation—but one is left guessing as to what kind of Germany he has in mind. Perhaps it is just a transplanting to German soil of a few teacups, a curate, a retired major general and an English garden. MURIEL H. BURNS

Knights of Labor

The Path I Trod, by Terence Vincent Powderly. New York: Columbia University Press. 474 pages. $4.50.
If You Don't Weaken, by Oscar Ameringer. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 494 pages. $2.75.

ALTHOUGH the tales of his magnificent derring-do thrilled workers and terrified employers of the 1880's, Terence Vincent Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Knights of Labor, has never impressed historians of the class struggle. "A windbag, a figure of lath and plaster," Louis Adamic called him, and most labor students have put him down as a sort of William Green, a compromiser and a muddled thinker, who capped his career of betrayal by taking a government job under the Hanna-McKinley gang. The Local Color school of American radicalism has ignored Powderly almost completely, while elevating into the great tradition many whose achievements were far less considerable.

Powderly anticipated these judgments, and in 1907, when he was fifty-eight, he started an autobiography "to tell why I did certain things." Somehow he never saw to the book's publication, and it was not until a year or so ago that a group of Columbia scholars obtained the manuscript from his widow. They have elected not to edit it as a professional publisher might have done, but have instead preserved everything that was Powderly's, down to his grammatical errors and misspellings. If the result makes for a better understanding of the man and his idiosyncrasies, which is dubious, it does not make an enjoyable book for the layman. It is prolix and disorganized, full of dull documents and bad jokes, and Powderly is allowed to apologize for his garrulousness by saying, "It's remarkable how one thing brings up another, as the old woman said after she swallowed a spoonful of ipecac."

Nevertheless, Powderly's self-portrait does add some new features. The worst thing that has been said of him was that he lost many strikes unnecessarily, and this has been charged to timidity, illusions of class collaboration and bad management as often as to personal dishonesty. But by his own explanation Powderly brings in a factor that removes some of the onus from himself. It seems that the Knights of Labor were seldom so strong as both members and enemies supposed them to be, and often they were involved in strikes in which their own representation was a small minority. In the Chicago stockyards strike of 1886, where Powderly's conduct has seemed most reprehensible, only 1,700 of the 25,000 strikers were members of the Knights of Labor.

Powderly regarded the whole wage system as something that had to be destroyed, but he had no intellectual consistency in approaching the problem. He was never sure whether he wanted a labor union, a fraternal order or a political organization. He swung from Greenbackism to the single tax, from municipal reform (he was three times mayor of Scranton) to Populism, and he ended his life as a Republican. He sought the approval of the respectables and joined their pack in condemning the Haymarket martyrs, but he was capable of standing firmly by a cause he really understood, such as Irish freedom. If this picture of confusion does not gain him a place among labor heroes, it at least places him in the main stream of the American movement, which has always been characterized by just the mixed and paradoxical qualities he possessed.

A far sprightlier Knight of Labor is Oscar Ameringer, who joined Powderly's Noble Order just before Haymarket and has lived to see the labor movement of the depression. Ameringer's part has been unique. A Bavarian immigrant lad, he came to this country in 1886 and started work in a Cincinnati furniture shop. In his youth he went through more jobs than even William Saroyan would dare to claim, but the major experience was a return to Europe, to Munich, where he studied art. At student meetings he heard the elder Liebknecht, and the spirited oratory and good sense of the Social Democrat made Ameringer a radical. Interludes as a steerage steward and as a clarinetist in a Grand Army band followed before he became a labor journalist and practically the only humorist the American Socialist movement has produced. The weekly American Guardian, the last of the flock of labor papers he has edited, and his own writings, often under the name of Adam Coaldigger, are the delight of all his readers, who represent every intellectual stratum.

Ameringer fell easily into the Marxist tradition, but he has been close enough to practical politics never to become involved in the guerilla warfare of the partisans. Rather his story is one of tussling with the Ku Klux Klan, farmer-labor campaigns, and shooing off Ph.D.'s who joined labor struggles with nothing more formidable than a Hegelian vocabulary. The Ameringer autobiography is almost entirely anecdotal, ranging from the fabulous tale of how he lived for days on a counterfeit quarter to the heartbreaking story of "Our Jack" Dalton, who was elected Governor of Oklahoma by the disinherited and promptly sold out to the oil barons. Ameringer has been anything but a mover and shaker, and certainly not a theorist in any accepted sense, but his story has its own importance as history and is as readable and richly humorous as any of the writings that have made him famous. RICHARD H. ROVERE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A Reader's List

DEFENSE FOR AMERICA, edited by William Allen White (Macmillan, $1). A collection of short articles by fourteen prominent citizens, mostly calling for all aid short of war to the Allies, together with a compilation of the President's recent addresses on the subject. They range in value from a sober estimate of the Pacific situation by Chester Harvey Rowell to hysterical outbursts against "this hideous thing that has been unleashed on Christendom." Calculated to convince the already convinced.

THE STRATEGY OF TERROR, by Edmond Taylor (Houghton Mifflin, $2.50). The ex-head of The Chicago Tribune's Paris bureau goes thoroughly into the subject of what it felt like to be in Europe between 1938 and September of 1939. His concern is with how this feeling—fear, uncertainty, fatalism, false optimism—influenced the course of events, and how the feeling itself was created or augmented by the skillful propaganda of interested parties at home and abroad. His book is done largely from the careful diaries he and his wife kept through this period. A convincing picture.

I MARRIED ADVENTURE, by Osa Johnson (Lippincott, $3.50). Someone said that Mrs. Johnson could be summed up as the kind of woman who gets her picture taken sitting on a dead lion; but this straightforward account of her life with Martin Johnson would give no suspicion of that. It makes him a sympathetic figure, perennially restless, loving photography and animals, and it shows that his work was of much use to the world. Although the prose is occasionally arch, it has a story-teller's knack. A fine present for those who explore lands of mystery, danger and beauty from the fireside.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE, by Stephen Leacock (Dodd, Mead, $2). As history or economics, this is an unimportant book. Its real purpose is expressed in the final paragraph: "The world needs an unwritten union of Britain, America and France. This will set up a standard to which all honest men may rally. This will build a barrier to shelter the weak against iniquity."

RUSSIA THROUGH THE AGES, by Stuart Ramsey Tompkins (Prentice-Hall, $6). A sober, honest and uninspired survey of Russian history and civilization, from their early beginnings to the conclusion of the Soviet-Finnish war. Contains photographs, maps, a glossary, a chronological table, an extensive bibliography and a detailed index. Useful as a reference book.

GUATEMALA, PAST AND PRESENT, by Chester Lloyd Jones (University of Minnesota Press, $5). An authority on the Caribbean analyzes, without prejudice or thesis, Guatemala's economic, social and political development since the Spanish conquest in 1524. The first book to comprehend this material, it is a thorough, well documented study, with many illustrations, notes, bibliography and index—the standard reference from now on. Valuable also for its implicit clues to the psychology and structure of other Latin American republics.

INTRODUCTION TO HOUSING, by Edith Elmer Wood (United States Housing Authority, 30 cents). A good summary of the facts, figures and principles considered by the USHA in its efforts to build better homes for better America. The charts, graphs and photographs show how it can be done and why it must be done. Fifteen "popular fallacies" are spiked in the process.

YOUR MARRIAGE, by Norman E. Himes (Farrar and Rinehart, $3.75). A practical handbook for young people contemplating marriage or already married. About a third of it deals with courtship and another third with the general problems of building and running a successful household (with good tips about credit and insurance). The rest of it deals with sex, but not as an isolated factor. All the familiar sexual questions are discussed frankly and sensibly, in relation to economic, psychological and social issues.

THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER and THE ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN, by Mark Twain (Modern Library, $1.25). Tom and Huck always belonged together, but this is the first time that both their stories have been printed in one big volume. This is among the newest of the Modern Library Giants, two others being "Leaves of Grass" and "The Best Known Novels of George Eliot."

Fiction

THE BEST SHORT STORIES: 1940, edited by Edward J. O'Brien (Houghton Mifflin, $2.75). Mr. O'Brien's perennial averages better than usual, with fair-to-good tales by Kay Boyle, Frances Eisenberg, Caroline Gordon, Ernest Hemingway, Mary King, Roderick Lull, Dorothy McCleary, James Pooler, Katherine Anne Porter, William Saroyan, Hans Otto Storm, Jesse Stuart and Benedict Thielen. Emilio Lussu's "Your General Does Not Sleep" takes the year's laurels.

MONKEY ON A STICK, by Henry W. Clune (Morrow, $2). Though not an exception to the rule that the satire in most "satiric" novels has had its teeth pulled, this one is a good item for the summer hammock. A Casper Milquetoast discovers that he has a hypnotic radio voice and becomes another Governor W. Lee ("Pass the Biscuits, Pappy") O'Daniell. Mr. Clune, by the way, is a columnist on the Frank Gannett newspapers, and may have observed at first hand the power of the radio and airplane in puffing up one or more submarginal personalities.

Contributors

JONATHAN MITCHELL, who lives in Washington, is well known for his articles on the political scene.

WYNDHAM LEWIS, born in America but an English citizen, launched the Vorticist school of painting and was its leader and spokesman. With Ezra Pound, he edited Blast. Among his books are "Tarr," "The Caliph's Design," "Time and Western Man," "The Childermass" and "Apes of God."

JOHN BERRYMAN is poetry editor of The Nation. He contributes to The Southern Review, The Kenyon Review and other periodicals.

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN is professor of Political Science at Williams College and the author, among other books, of "Europe on the Eve," published by Alfred A. Knopf.

W. H. AUDEN, the English poet, is now living in this country. Besides three plays written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, he has also written "Poems," "On This Island" and, with Isherwood, "Journey to a War."

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN's latest book, "The Deadly Parallel," about the first and second World Wars, was published last winter by Stackpole Sons. Although he is American born, his parents, grandparents and great-grandparents were all born in Canada.

MURIEL H. BURNS, a recent graduate of Smith College, is a member of the editorial staff of The New Republic.

RICHARD H. ROVERE, formerly an associate editor of The New Masses, has contributed to various magazines.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED